AMERICAN HUMANE CERTIFIED™

# Free Range Laying Hen Operations
# EXTERIOR ACCESS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

## FARM & DOCUMENT DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Farm Name** | |
| **Flock/House ID** | |
| **Date SOP Created** | |
| **Date Last Reviewed** | *Review annually or after any significant system change* |
| **Version Number** | *e.g. v1.0* |
| **Prepared By** | |
| **Approved By (Manager/Owner)** | |

## SECTION 1 — SHADE, COVER & PREDATOR SCREENING MAINTENANCE

Describe how shade, overhead cover, and/or any predator screening in the outdoor area is maintained. Shade must be present beyond the first third of the range closest to the house wall at a minimum of two distance points from the house.

### 1.1 Description of shade/overhead cover provided

Type(s) of shade provided (e.g. trees, shade sails, purpose-built structures):

| | |
|---|---|
| **Shade types & locations** | *e.g. mature oak trees at 20m from house; shade sail structure at 50m and 100m from east wall* |
| | |
| | |

Describe the stepping-stone distribution (shade at 2+ distance points from house):

| | |
|---|---|
| **Distribution description** | *e.g. Point 1: woodchip & shade sail at 5–10m; Point 2: tree canopy at 40–60m* |
| | |

### 1.2 Shade/cover maintenance schedule

| MAINTENANCE TASK | FREQUENCY | RESPONSIBLE PERSON/NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Inspect shade structures for damage or wear** | | |
| **Trim or manage trees/hedges providing shade** | | |
| **Check overhead netting or screening is intact** | | |
| **Clean and clear shade areas accessible to birds** | | |
| **Inspect and repair any predator screening** | | |

# SECTION 2 — PREDATOR PROTECTION & WILD BIRD MANAGEMENT

Describe how birds are protected from predators and wild birds, and how they are secured at night.

## 2.1 Predator species present/risk assessment

| | |
|---|---|
| **Known/likely predators** | *e.g. fox, badger, birds of prey, mink — list species relevant to your location* |

## 2.2 Physical predator exclusion measures

| MEASURE | DETAILS (materials, location, height, maintenance) |
|---|---|
| **Perimeter fencing** | |
| **Overhead netting or wire** | |
| **Pop-hole closing mechanism** | |
| **Other exclusion measures** | |

## 2.3 Wild bird prevention measures

| | |
|---|---|
| **Wild bird management** | *e.g. overhead netting, removal of standing water, feed management, covered feed storage* |

# SECTION 3 — DAILY OUTDOOR ACCESS PROCEDURES

Describe the daily procedure for opening and closing outdoor access. Birds must have a minimum of 8 hours of outdoor access during daylight hours, weather permitting.

## 3.1 Morning opening procedure

| STEP | ACTION | TYPICAL TIME | RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Check weather conditions against criteria in Section 4 | | |
| 2 | Check outdoor area is safe (no predator signs, no hazards) | | |
| 3 | Open pop-holes systematically (all or by section) | | |
| 4 | Confirm pop-holes are fully unobstructed | | |
| 5 | Record outdoor access as “Yes” in daily log | | |

## 3.2 Evening closing procedure

| STEP | ACTION | TYPICAL TIME | RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Walk range perimeter to check all birds returning | | |
| 2 | Close pop-holes once birds are inside | | |
| 3 | Secure perimeter fence/gates | | |
| 4 | Carry out PM inspection and record in daily log | | |
| 5 | Lock or secure house for the night | | |

### 3.3 Minimum daily access commitment

| | |
|---|---|
| **Target opening time (summer)** | *e.g. 07:00* |
| **Target opening time (winter)** | *e.g. 08:00 or at first light* |
| **Target closing time** | *e.g. dusk/30 min before dark* |
| **Minimum hours access provided** | *Standard = 8 hours (weather permitting)* |
| **Who is responsible for opening/closing** | *Name or role* |
| **Backup person if primary unavailable** | |

## SECTION 4 — WEATHER CRITERIA FOR SECURING BIRDS INDOORS

Describe the specific weather conditions under which birds will be secured indoors. These must be clearly defined in advance. Indoor confinement due to weather counts toward the 90-day annual cap.

| WEATHER CONDITION | THRESHOLD/TRIGGER (fill in your farm criteria) | NOTES/RATIONALE |
|---|---|---|
| **Heavy rain/standing water on range** | | |
| **Sustained wind speed** | | |
| **Extreme cold (temperature)** | | |
| **Extreme heat (temperature)** | | |
| **Snow/ice on range** | | |
| **Fog/reduced visibility (predator risk)** | | |
| **Lightning/electrical storm** | | |
| **Disease outbreak/AI risk (vet-directed)** | | |
| **Other (specify)** | | |

*Important: Days birds are confined on veterinarian recommendation due to disease risk (e.g. avian influenza, HPAI) must be recorded separately in the Confinement Tracker and do NOT count toward the 90-day weather cap. The vet's recommendation must be on file.*

## SECTION 5 — OUTDOOR DUSTBATHING SUBSTRATE PROVISION & MAINTENANCE

Describe how outdoor dustbathing opportunities are provided and maintained. Outdoor dustbathing substrate should be kept dry and accessible.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Type of substrate provided** | *e.g. dry sand, fine-particle soil, wood ash mix* |
| **Location(s) in outdoor area** | *Describe* |
| **Is substrate covered or sheltered?** | *Yes/No — covered preferred to maintain dryness* |
| **Approximate quantity/size of area** | *e.g. 4m × 2m covered sand pit* |
| **How often is substrate topped up or replaced** | *e.g. weekly in wet weather, monthly otherwise* |
| **Responsible person** | |

# SECTION 6 — GROUND REMEDIATION & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Describe the active management protocol for remediating damaged or waterlogged ground and supporting vegetation regrowth.

## 6.1 Vegetation management approach

| | |
|---|---|
| **Management approach** | *e.g. rotational grazing system, periodic resting of sections, overseeding program — see also Rotational Grazing & Reseeding Plan* |
| | |
| | |

## 6.2 Indicators used to trigger ground remediation

Mark all that apply to your farm:

- ☐ Visible bare soil patches exceeding 10% of a range section
- ☐ Persistent pooling or waterlogging after normal rainfall
- ☐ Compaction/poaching from bird traffic
- ☐ Vegetation cover estimated below 55% (early action before audit threshold)
- ☐ Other (specify below)

## 6.3 Remediation actions

| REMEDIATION ACTION | WHEN APPLIED | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE/NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Close affected section to bird access** | | |
| **Apply woodchip or other substrate to damaged high-traffic areas** | | |
| **Overseeding/reseeding bare patches** | | |
| **Drainage improvement (ditching, French drain etc.)** | | |
| **Applying lime to waterlogged areas** | | |
| **Review flock rotation schedule** | | |

# SIGN-OFF & VERSION HISTORY

| COMPLETED BY | REVIEWED/APPROVED BY |
|---|---|
| **Name** | **Name** |
| **Signature** | **Signature** |
| **Date** | **Date** |
| **Title/Role** | **Title/Role** |

| VERSION | DATE | SUMMARY OF CHANGES |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |